



# TAC Tanker Tales



Volume 7 Issue 2

December 2006

## Gearing Up for "The Stars of Branson" Reunion

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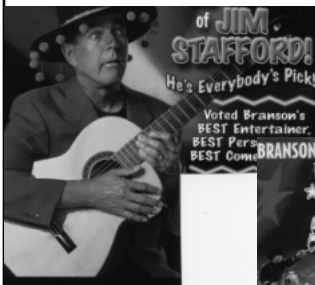
### CORRECTION:

**In the last newsletter we indicated that we would be in Emeryville CA in January for a 3 day lay over from a tour group and wanted anyone to join us at the Holiday Inn Bay Bridge. The dates are the 5th, 6th, and 7th (Fri-Sun). Our train back east leaves on Monday morning. We look forward to seeing all of you who have said you were coming and want the dates right. N and N**

Here it comes guys and gals! Your info and registration forms are in THIS newsletter and we are focusing on a grand gathering in Branson from Wed, May 16th to Sunday morning, May 20, when we once again have check out time.

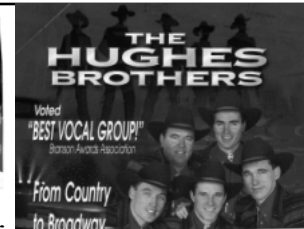
We have been booked into the Lodge of the Ozarks for two years now and the final planning for the excursions, shows, banquet, etc. are all in place. As usual we have a perfect Hospitality Room just off the lobby where we will have our refreshments and 'store.' Rate is \$70.

We have contracted with Gathering Plus for our transportation and shows at some reasonable rates. As you will see on the BLUE form there are oodles to choose from and descriptions are there too. Pick and chose. We know there may be shows you want to go to, but we felt these were a good cross section of the entertainment.



Our Banquet on Saturday night will have a theme: Denim and Diamonds and choices of three combo plates which sound delicious.

Of course we will have a special momento and the usual selection of door prizes (for those of you who haven't won one yet). Just before our social hour we have a famed group photographer taking a group photo in the lobby.



He will have our prints by the end of the dinner. Info is on the blue form.

Because this is an odd number year, we don't have a business meeting or a Memorial Ceremony. They will be saved for 2008.

Speaking of the year 2008, we will be having two reunions!!! Once we left Dayton and the vote was in, we contacted several hotels in San Antonio (the winner) and found one on the Riverwalk (Holiday Inn) which would allow us to have our own refreshments in our Hospitality Room (a must!). We will be there Sun 5/18-Wed night 5/21 with check out on Thursday morning. Best rate of \$99.

The second reunion was at the request of Pres. Rufe Mewborn who wants the association to experience all the aviation history of the Washington DC area. You guys will recall the unofficial hands up vote at the Dayton business meeting? Well, it takes two years of planning to scout sites, hotels, tour companies, etc so 2008 in the Fall was the target. John Bessett concurred on October and so we are presently contacting Convention and Visitor Bureaus in the DC area to find a site to suit our needs and pocketbooks. More info in the next newsletter.

We were in Charleston SC this November to run my Sorority Reunion and have found the hotel for the 2009 reunion. Since that was our third time down there in two years, planning will be a piece of cake. This was the second city winner.

*-The Editor and co-Reunion Planner*

## The President's Corner By Warren Mewborn

### New Life Members

Bruce M. Kramer, Eugene OR-429  
Patrick P. Selfridge, Kenmore WA-421

### Welcome New Members

Charles B. Carsten, Tupelo MS-420.  
Sidney G. Dubbert, Tipton MO-421

It was very gratifying to receive all of the favorable comments concerning the TAC Tanker DVD. I hope that each of you will share it with your children to better explain to them your contributions for world peace during the Cold War. Your friends and neighbors would probably enjoy seeing it also. I thank you for recognizing that it was not an easy task, but one that I did with a lot of love and appreciation for the KB-50, all of the TAC Tanker crew members and the thousands of support personnel.

From the comments it is obvious that many of you are unaware of my lengthy service in the TAC Tanker business. Most of the DVD footage came from 8mm Kodak movies which I filmed in 1955 and 1960. My first assignment after pilot training was the 429<sup>th</sup> AREFS at Langley. We ferried the KB-29s from various SAC bases, and more or less taught ourselves how to fly them and to accomplish the in-flight refueling operations. After 20 months I became an Aircraft Commander and succeeded in not killing anyone as I progressed to the KB-50 as an AC and IP. In 1958 after the Mackay Trophy mission in the Pacific, we were transferred to RAF Station Sculthorpe and the 420<sup>th</sup> AREFS. I spent a lot of TDYs in Spain and North Africa instructing other crews and checking out the pilots. These were in addition to flying refueling missions and standing Tango Alert in England.

We left England in January 1962 and went to Birmingham Alabama. I became the Chief Acceptance pilot for the Air Force. We were involved in the acceptance flights for all of the B-50s going through contract maintenance. Since I was the only qualified B-50 pilot, I got to fly all of the flights. In doing this, and during my time at Langley and Sculthorpe, I believe I flew every KB, RB, and WB-50 in the inventory. It was a lot of fun!

It was interesting that I had participated in the delivery of one of the early B-50s from Tucson to Birmingham in 1956 and took the last KB-50J at Hayes back to Tucson in 1964. After eleven years in the TAC Tanker business I had over 1000 hours in the KB-29 and over 3100 in the KB-50. Later in my Air Force career I flew the C-141 and C-5. However, nothing compared to the hours in the KB-50; the places we went, the missions we flew and the dedicated crews that always got the job done!!

### REFUND

In March of this year Mr. Daniel Ryan of the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona reported that the museum has nearly 300 aircraft in their collection and the KB-50 (49-372) was not in their plans for restora-

tion in the foreseeable future. The TAC Tanker Association

(TTA) Board approved a request at the Dayton reunion to have the money returned to the TTA Treasury. A letter was sent to Mr. Ryan and in July we received a check for \$8345 which refunded all of our donations dating back to 2000. A special thanks to Chuck Monka who led the effort to get Pima to restore the aircraft.

### KB-50J at MacDill

At the membership meeting at Dayton it was also decided to renew the effort to get the KB-50J on static display just inside the gate at MacDill AFB, Florida, moved to a more suitable location. There are two fine museums that have indicated an interest in having this aircraft in their inventory. They are at Dover AFB and Robins AFB.

First it was necessary to convince the authorities to declare the aircraft excess to their needs at MacDill. The South Tampa Chamber of Commerce had expended over \$80,000 to build the air park at MacDill and acquire three aircraft in addition to the KB-50J. They had requested a B-50 for the display, and the Air Force museum was unable to provide a bomber, so they selected "our" KB-50J, 49-389 as the best substitute. This plane had been flown to the AF Museum on February 17, 1965, by a 431<sup>st</sup> crew. The aircraft was prepared for transfer by giving it a new paint scheme based on a 421<sup>st</sup> photo, and the number 48-114 was painted on the tail and it was trucked to MacDill.

The host wing at MacDill is the 6<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing under the Air Mobility Command and the commander is Colonel Margaret H. Woodward. She became a tanker pilot in 1986 and was sympathetic to our desire to move the aircraft to a friendlier environment. She agreed to give up the KB-50J if it could be replaced with a KC-135R. The Chamber of Commerce was not as easy to convince. She appointed her Director of Staff to study the proposal and to work with me and the Chamber to arrive at a solution.

Meanwhile TTA member Richard Schweikhart had volunteered to help with some general officer contacts he had maintained for many years. His letter to General Schwartz, Commander, US Transportation Command, was forwarded to General McNabb, Commander, Air Mobility Command (AMC). We also sent letters to General Corley, guest speaker at the Dayton dedication, Major General (R) Metcalf at the National Museum and the Military Affairs Committee of the Tampa Chamber. There were several conference calls (cont. on pg 3)



## Letters Received From Our New Members

Charles B. Carsten of Tupelo, MS (November 2006)

Flew as Navigator on both the KB-29P and the KB-50D/J. Left the service to obtain a degree at Memphis State University then worked in Mainframe Computers for nearly 40 years. Maintained Military as a Navigator in the Tennessee Air National Guard. Retired with 4600+ hours of flying time mostly in cargo aircraft.

Am now retired in every way. Same wife for almost 50 years; four children; 11 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren. One daughter went into the Navy and is still a reservist as an O-6. Another daughter went into the USAF and left as a captain. Our son started in the Marines and is currently an E-8 in the Mississippi National Guard and just returned from Iraq.

Bruce M. Kramer of Eugene, OR (September 2006)

I was a navigator assigned to Chris Christensen's crew. Langley was my first assignment; aviation cadet, bombardier training, then KB-50s. My short stay was tremendously educational to say the least, and I met and married my wife. We are now on our 44th year of marriage. We have two daughters, the eldest has 3 children and lives in Portland and the youngest has 2 children and lives in Chesapeake, VA, where her husband is a Senior Petty officer in the Coast Guard.

One, of many, learning experiences from Langley that has probably had one of the most far reaching benefits involved a senior Major who taught me a lot by one simple sentence. I wish that "Rocky" Weishare was still alive because I would like to have thanked him.. Even though I was not assigned to Rocky's crew, I was in the Azores with him and flew home on one of those single ship flights where there was a refueling on the way home.

Apparently, it was in the winter because we went up north to Newfoundland and down through New York. I can only imagine that this was because of the strong jet streams. Anyway, the trip took about fourteen hours of flight time and I was worn out by the time we got down to New York. I don't remember the reason, but Rocky asked me to give him headings rather than flying on the airway using the CDI. Being the loud mouth that I was, I probably told him I was tired and he could do better than I could using the VOR.

After arriving at Langley, going through Customs, and finally getting to the Squadron, Rocky took me aside and asked what my problem was. That really got me going and I spouted off for ten or more minutes before I started to slow down. Rocky just kept looking at me with no apparent reaction so I started up again. The next time I stopped, he asked if that was all. I said it was and the only response he had was that I had forgotten to call him "sir." At that, he turned around and walked off.

I left the Squadron in June 1963, went to Hurlburt Field at Eglin AFB for crew and aircraft familiarization in the B-26 prior to going to Bien Hoa, VN. I flew as a navigator/bombardier from Sept. until March 1964. There were several B-50 types there at the same time. The 26s were grounded due to wing spar failure. Those of us that had not completed a major share of our one year tour were extended for another year and reassigned to Clark AB, PI and retrained in B-57s. (cont. on page 4)

(President: Continued from page 2)  
and numerous phone calls. On September 29<sup>th</sup> we received a letter from Lt General Kelly, Vice Commander, AMC that stated:

**"It is my distinct pleasure to inform you that the Tampa local community and the MacDill Air Force Base military community have reached an agreement on the movement of the KB-50J to the AMC Museum at Dover. Once the appropriate paperwork is accomplished and a KC-135 becomes available to replace the KB-50J static display, Air Mobility Command will coordinate the relocation."**

So, the move to the AMC Museum at Dover has been approved. The Director of the museum, Mr. Michael D. Leister, [www.amcmuseum.org](http://www.amcmuseum.org), was also instrumental in the decision as he welcomed the opportunity to restore and display the KB-50J. He indicated that they would probably contract for the disassembly of the airframe and fly it to Dover in a C-5. The outside contract could run as high as \$35,000 and Mr. Leister indicated that he could possibly handle that with year-end funds. The exterior paint, decals and serial number will be changed to reflect the last squadron that flew it on active duty, the 431<sup>st</sup> at Biggs.

The Air Force recently issued a draft request for bids on the new tanker contract and until that process is well under way the Air Force will not retire any of the current KC-135s. I have suggested to Colonel Woodward that the KC-135 will probably require a larger concrete ramp than the one currently under the KB-50. It may save time if the KB-50 were moved out now and the construction begun on the new ramp. So far she has not bought that proposal.

### **The Chaplain's Corner**

*This has been the best of years for me! After three major surgeries in the past five months, I find myself renewed and looking forward to carrying on as your Chaplain. If that's OK with you?*

*There was a time I wasn't sure I could go on. GOD has stepped in and wants me to tell you again and how much HE loves you and yours. HE wants to be your friend, to pray for you daily and ask that you do the same for each other. God's continued Blessings be with you and your this coming Christmas-Hanukkah Season! Marilyn and I send you our best—have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

*\_ Pastor George Burrows*

**Letters** (cont. from page 3)

Our wives came over, starting in August 1964, but of course, the Gulf of Tonkin coincided with their arrival. We went back and forth to Bien Hoa and spent probably about half the time at Clark. I had applied for pilot training while I was in Viet Nam and received assignment to Webb AFB in Big Spring, TX. I was fortunate in that some of the B-26s and the B-57s were dual controlled.

The pilots that I was crewed with had taught me to fly, make radio calls, and even let me try to land. They were of the opinion that if they were shot, maybe I could get the airplane on the ground. Anyway, I had some experience in sitting on an ejection seat and wearing a helmet that helped a lot in pilot training. I did pretty good and was able to get the assignment that I wanted upon graduation. I went to Sheppard AFB as a T-37 instructor in the German AFB pilot training program. It was great!

I left active duty in June 1970 after first getting a job at an Air Force Reserve unit in Portland. I only had one year of college so the hand writing was on the wall that more than likely I would never be able to get a promotion beyond Captain. I flew the HU-16 (a great boat but a lot of work as an airplane). The squadron eventually converted to helicopters so my family and I went to Ft. Rucker, AL to learn the Army method of flying. Our first helicopter was the HH-34 Choctaw, then eventually the HH-1H "Huey." I retired in 1984 after 24 years of combined active duty and reserve time.

When I left active duty, I returned and finished a degree in accounting at Portland State University and went to work for the IRS as an auditor for a couple of years and then transferred to the Criminal Investigation Division in Eugene. I worked criminal tax cases for about ten years and then started working narcotics cases. I was assigned to the local Inter-agency Narcotics Enforcement Team until I retired in 1995. We have a great amount of methamphetamine addiction, and associated meth labs to supply the narcotics.

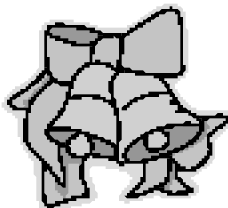
A short history, but enjoyable and eventful. My brief stay at Langley had a lot to do with my careers.

**BITS AND OBITS**

Word from Newport News that Jim Underhill's wife, Susan passed away from lung cancer on 20 Aug 2006. Jim was a member of the 427 at Langley.

*We also lost Marion R. "Dizzy" Gillaspie of cancer on 23 Aug 2006. He was buried in the National Cemetery in Dallas-Ft. Worth.*

Happier news comes from Gus Rinaldi in Georgia. "To all our friends—Ann and I were married yesterday, October 15th, at St. George Catholic Church in Newnan, GA. Leaving on a cruise to the Mexican Riviera this coming weekend. Best to all."



**Words From A Visiting Chaplain**

Let me introduce myself before we begin talking about the topic at hand. Several months ago Nate asked if I would write an article, to which I agreed.

My introduction to the 421st and the KB-50J was in August of 1958. It was my first assignment after Tech. School at Chanute. Yokota was the start of many firsts for me, first College classes through the U of Maryland, first time I taught a Sunday school class at the base chapel and had fun with Major Bradberry.

It was also the place, Showa, where I took private flying lessons and learned to fly a Cessna 120 and 140. That started a love for aviation that is still hot today after restoring two Ercoupe's and currently flying a very nice J 35 Bonanza. Thanks for allowing me to indulge for a moment, and one last comment, I work as a hospice chaplain in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

This time of year gives rise to a host of traditions as defined by the various religious bodies. It is time to take inventory of the blessing the last year has bestowed upon us. And I would also encourage you to think about the blessing you have been to others.

Whose life is a bit better because of what you did for them? That is no small task. Think for a moment of the police officer, as an example, and all the traffic control they do and what that does to keep traffic moving, and we don't even know the person's name. Isn't that something!!!! And it happens every day, not only in that example but in the work and daily contacts you and I have in all kinds of situations.

There is also the time to address the birth of a new year. The opportunity we have to clean the slate, a *tabula rosa*, to begin a new year. What does that mean to you? What potential does that hold for the new year, for you, for your loved ones and others.

I remember sitting alone at the end of the runway on 3 October 1959 in the 120 and pointed it down the PSP runway for my solo flight! (Seventeen years old) What a thrill!!!!

I still get goose bumps when I meet a hospice patient and hear their story. And again usually weeks later when the family returns a note saying thanks for helping them and their loved one navigate through their solo adventure, the adventure of having a loved one launched into eternity.

How is your community better because of you? How will the new year be blessed because of you? My prayer for you is to address the first question and don't be afraid to consider yourself a gift, and amplify that as the world gives birth to a new year.

By the way, goose bumps still happen as the throttle is advanced and the full potential of the Continental comes alive!

Chaplain - Pastor Bill Steinke  
Ret. USAF

Since the May TAC Tankers reunion I have continued research into our past. I have begun "playing" in the unit histories of the 4440<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Delivery Group, the outfit which oversaw the delivery of all sorts of aircraft from the US to destinations all around the world.

We remember the 4440<sup>th</sup> as the unit whose detachments manned the various stations where we spent so much of our TDY time, and with whom we worked so hard to refuel all the various aircraft which required our "gas station" services over the Atlantic & Pacific. Their detachments were our "homes away from home" at such places as Kindley, Bermuda; Lajes, Azores; Chateauroux, France; McClellan AFB, California; Hickam AFB, Hawaii; and other fine spots.

The 4440<sup>th</sup> was activated on 15 January 1958 at Langley AFB, Virginia, home of Tactical Air Command headquarters. It succeeded the 1708th Ferrying Wing (MATS), and absorbed most of its people and units. The Air Staff had decided to make this change because of TAC's increasing capability to deploy its combat and support units overseas in the Composite Air Strike Force concept. It was a natural fit, and the 4440<sup>th</sup> did this job well past the end of our era in 1965. Its problems and successes were our own. After the 4505<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing was inactivated in October 1963, the 4440<sup>th</sup> became the "higher headquarters" for the two remaining TAC refueling squadrons, the 431<sup>st</sup> and the 622<sup>nd</sup>. More on the 4440<sup>th</sup>'s role and activity with us in later editions of the "Tales."

Also since the reunion, where those attending were subjected to my "talk" on our history, I have begun giving the talk to other interested groups. In November I presented it to the Hollin Hall Military History Forum, here in northern Virginia. I got a lot of good questions from those folks, many of whom had had no idea of what we did. Fortunately there was a KC-135 veteran in the audience, who helped me field questions beyond my competence!

Later in the month I gave the talk to the northern Virginia chapter of the American Aviation Historical Society, a very knowledgeable crowd. There I was helped by a KC-10 veteran. So I keep learning as well as teaching. I will give the talk next in Williamsburg, Virginia, to that chapter of the Virginia Aviation Historical Society. I hope to have some of our Tac Tanker vets from the Peninsula area there to help out as well. And in May I'll be giving it to the annual convention of the Council on America's Military Past, being held in Hampton, VA. So we're getting some mileage out of this thing!

I have also been working with [Aerospace Modeler Magazine](#), providing help to an article to be published on the B-50 aircraft. They contacted Nate Hill for help on the KB-50, and I have given them help on our aircraft markings, providing photos. It should be a good article.

Next in this issue of "Tales" you will see Norm Kelley's tale of a disaster narrowly averted, a KB-29M refueling incident with the 421<sup>st</sup> in 1956. He avoided the fate of the 421<sup>st</sup> crew who lost five folks in April 1954 (see last June's "Tanker Tales" for that story). Thanks, Norm.

### **A Ride on the Ragged Edge** **A true story of a frightful experience on the KB-29M**

*Written by Norman L. Kelley, Reel Operator, 421<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Squadron,  
Yokota AB, Japan*

It was, as best as I can recall, the fall of 1956. The mission was to be routine – one that we had flown many times before. We were scheduled to pick up some F-84s over the Nagoya area for practice refueling, fly a short navigational leg, return to Yokota for a few practice landings, and then call it a day.

The preflight checks went smoothly and we made our takeoff on schedule. As soon as we departed the Yokota area, we took a heading directly to the refueling area and began to climb to our assigned altitude. We reached the refueling area on time, settled into a refueling pattern, and waited for the receivers to arrive. Within minutes of our arrival, the navigator established contact with the receivers and the pilot directed us (the refueling operators) to prepare for refueling.

It was my turn to do the refueling that day, so I gathered up my gear and moved back into the aft unpressurized compartment where the refueling equipment was located. After cranking up "Old Betsy" and trailing the refueling hose, I informed the pilot that I was ready for refueling. Shortly thereafter, the first F-84 pulled up behind the tanker and I informed him too that we were ready to refuel.

Through the little mirror we used to monitor the refueling operation, I watched the receiver approach the drogue; however, I was unable to keep the receiver and drogue in view because of the light turbulence. Actually, such turbulence was almost always present at the altitude we refueled at, so it did not give me concern. To set this point at rest, we had refueled under conditions that far surpassed that which we were now confronted with, and in my opinion, the turbulence had nothing to do with the events that were to follow. I did not see the receiver make contact with the drogue, but the hose began to slowly rewind on the drum, so I knew the receiver had made contact. Still unable to see the receiver in my little mirror, I then gave my full attention to hose movement on the refueling unit.

Suddenly, with no time for thought or action, I saw the refueling unit trying to rewind with only a short section of hose left on the drum and pumping 230 gallons per minute of JP4 fuel all over the aft unpressurized compartment. I managed to get my hand on the manual hand brake and stop the reel from turning, but I was still pumping fuel up against the upper part of the fuselage, with most of it pouring down on me and the refueling unit.

(Continued on page 6)

## **A Ride** (continued from page 5)

The fuel flow was so heavy that I could not even see the refueling unit; however, I was still able to force my hands through the stream of fuel and power down "Old Betsy." With the fuel pumping problem under control, I immediately opened the upper escape hatch and the aft entrance door to get some fresh air into the soaked compartment.

My eyes were burning fiercely, and I thought I was going to "lose my cookies." So I entered the aft pressurized compartment, grabbed the water jug, and emptied it all over my head and my flight suit. I then changed out my parachute, grabbed a fire extinguisher, and reentered the aft unpressurized compartment. I gave thought to emptying the fire extinguisher all over the compartment, but then thought it best to save it as an insurance policy. The JP4 was beginning to drain from the aircraft, and looking out the aft entrance door I could see the long vapor trail it was producing. Throughout the first part of this experience the right scanner had maintained his position, so I assumed he was keeping the rest of the crew up to date on what was taking place. To satisfy my concerns, I gave the crew a quick update on our status.

We thought our crisis was under control, but the aft unpressurized and the aft pressurized compartments suddenly filled with fuel vapors. They got so thick that I could not even see the right scanner or hardly anything in either compartment. I heard the right scanner call out to the crew that the two compartments were filled with smoke. The pilot said, "Did you say smoke?" I quickly broke into the conversation and stated that we had no smoke but were experiencing heavy fuel vapors throughout the aft section of the aircraft. Although my description was ac-

curate, it put the whole crew into total silence. After a short period, the vapors began to dissipate, so I immediately brought the whole crew up to date, for obvious reasons. When the fuel vapors had all but disappeared, I once again informed the crew that, although our status was still precarious, I thought we had an upper hand on our troubles. What had brought these fuel vapors upon us is probably the changing fuel-to-air mixture, but we'll never know.

While all of our troubles in the rear were going on, the crew up front had set us on a direct course back to Yokota. The aircraft commander informed us that we would be cranking the gear down manually and also be making a no-flap landing. Furthermore, the engineer stated that he did not want to use the auxiliary power unit (APU) on landing and received no arguments. When it came time to have the main landing gear lowered, the aircraft commander directed that both refueling operators enter the aft bomb bay at the same time and get the gear down as soon as possible. With heavy fuel fumes still present, the thought of leaving no one in the rear of the aircraft to monitor our status gave me much concern; however, we did as directed and had the gear fully down and locked in a minimum of time. Upon checking back in at our assigned positions, we were immediately told that we had been cleared for a direct approach into Yokota and to immediately prepare for landing. The final approach was hot, but the aircraft was set down with the greatest of skill and we were home safe.

The following morning, with nothing more than a couple of fuel blisters on my back caused by the wet flight suit and parachute harness, I attended the morning roll call and looked forward to the new day.

## **Words From Our Chairman of the Board**

Dear Fellow Tankers,

I just want to say again how wonderful the reunion was at Dayton. The accommodations were good, the planning superb, the banquet outstanding. The Dedication Ceremony was truly wonderful. I was so proud of all of you for sitting through the rain storm and staying to the end.

General Corley was a great man as he took the rain in stride and then was gracious enough to stay around to talk and have his picture taken with as many as wanted.

I had planned to say this in the last two newsletters, but we were on the go when this was due. We left Ohio to go to our grand-daughters wedding in Jacksonville, FL by way of Atlanta, St. Pete, Melbourne and finally to Jacksonville. It was a beautiful wedding and a great time of fellowship, almost as good as the reunion.

We have had a very busy and wonderful summer and I hope all of you have too. Shirley and I headed to Israel on September 28th for the high Holy Days and the Feast of the Tabernacles, returning in mid October.

May God bless you and your families throughout the coming holidays. Keep the faith!

— Bill Wolford

## “What Did You Do After The Air Force Daddy”

A couple of days ago, Nate and I were swapping stories about TDY's to some of the garden spots of the world, such as Wake Island and the Azores when the question came up “What did you do after the Air Force?” Humm!! What did we do?? At that, Nate suggested that maybe we all need to share these jewels with the rest of the Tanker Troops.

So to start off, what I hope will become an ongoing column in the Newsletter, I guess I will go first.

After retiring in 1979, in Brookings, South Dakota (centrally located 150 miles from anywhere in any direction) I joined the electronics world with Bell and Howell. Unfortunately they wanted us to move to Chicago and in the words of the mighty Sioux “We split the blanket.”

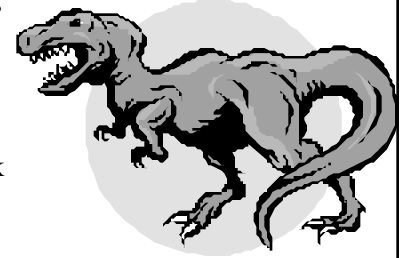
Since Joyce had a good job teaching at Brookings High School, I was able to coast for a few months, but with four kids in school finding a job became paramount. With luck I found a job as a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher in Flandreau, SD.

Being involved in Education also meant being involved in coaching. My Sport was hockey and since there was no hockey in SD at that time we started South Dakota Hockey and Figure Skating. In the beginning it was just a couple of teams playing outdoors but over time it caught on big time and has become the prime winter sport with indoor rinks and all the trimmings.

In 1988 we were bitten by the wanderlust bug and moved to El Paso, Texas, where Joyce taught Physics, Astronomy and Geology and I again taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science until we retired in 2002. End of story right? Not hardly, because teaching left us summers free to do the things we really wanted to do.

Our first adventure was working with the South

Dakota School of Mines, Museum of Geology prospecting for Dinosaurs. So off to such beauty spots as Mud Butte, SD and Bug Creek Montana. (these places made Wake look like a paradise). Over a period of four or five years our team uncovered Tyrannosaurus Rex, Triceratops, Hadrosaurus, and Champsasaurus skeletons. The T Rex and Hadrasaur are on display in the museum in Rapid City SD. In addition to prospecting, Joyce wrote a book “Dinosaurs On Our Door Step.”



Needing to get out of the dry heat of Dinosaur Land we switched gears and headed for Alaska and glaciers. Working with Eastern Montana State University we camped our way from Ice Field to Ice Field studying the Mildenhall and Takau Glaciers. At one point we were working in the Ice Caves beneath the Mildenhall Glacier. Again Joyce wrote a book “The Glaciers of Eastern South Dakota.”

Our next adventure was going to be Archeology in the Jungles of Beleze, where after we had a study grant, health problems intervened and alas, we had to change from workers to tourists.

Having one son stationed in Europe and our daughter stationed on Okinawa, visiting the kids and exotic places, (no not Argentia, Newfoundland), that the Air Force never sent us, we did get to Germany, Japan, China, Bermuda, Australia, and Mexico to name a few. Nowadays we still travel, frequently visiting “old friends,” often from our KB50 and C130 days. And of course, we have one priority trip each year, The TAC Tanker Reunion, so I guess we'll see you in Branson, Missouri next year.

Frank and Joyce Gawell 427<sup>th</sup> AFREFS.

## Responses to “The Sound of a Round Engine” (from guys who should know)

*We were sitting on the ramp at Lajes, Azores one day, when the pilot brought us a loaf of bread and some cheese, and began to tell the crew why he joined the Air Force. It was because of the sound of the engine, when the B-29 engine started. The 2nd Lt. Went on to say, “There is nothing to compare to the sound of a B-29 engine cranking up: first you get the sound of the starter building up speed, then wait for the voltage to come back up to 24 volts, before you engage the starter to the engine.” A three finger operation, some folks could not do this in 100 years, some could do it on the first try.*

Bob Thomas

*The story of the “Sound of the Round Engine” is how I felt about the engine start of both the '29 and the KB-50. On the B-29, the co-pilot had the job of turning over the engines during the preflight. I got to sit at the engineers panel and turn the props through eleven turns while the engineer listened for loose parts (I was told). I looked forward to that as much as the actual flight. I think every kid should have a coming-of-age moment, going to wherever they still have a big recip engine and just stand there listening to it run. I still have that sound embedded in a distant recess of my memory and pull it up once in awhile just for the goose bumps.*

Don Bill

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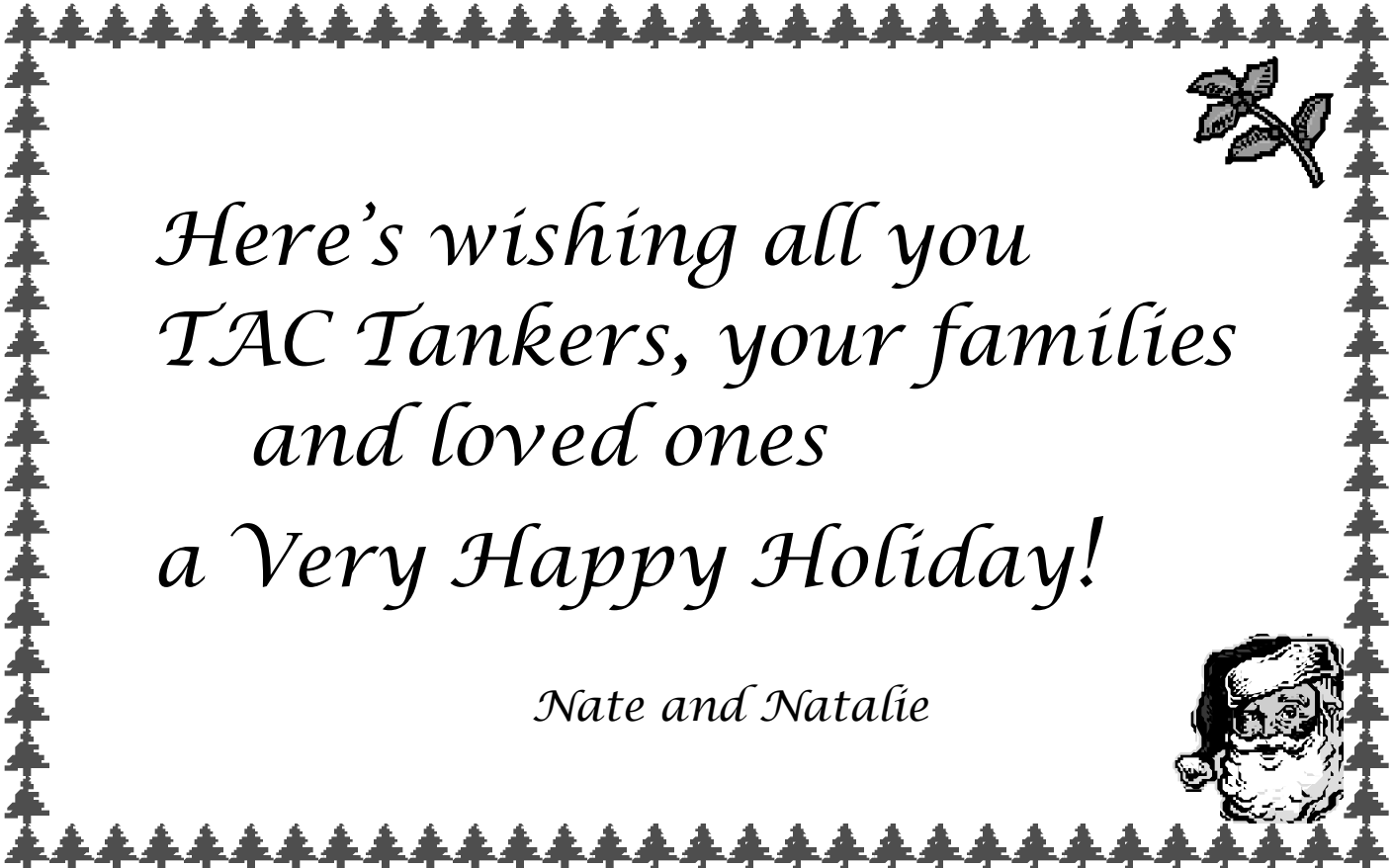
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**Dues Notices Inside** For those of you who are due to renew your TAC Tanker membership, you will find a notice inside this issue. Please check over the deadline date.



*Here's wishing all you  
TAC Tankers, your families  
and loved ones  
a Very Happy Holiday!*

*Nate and Natalie*

